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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

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Subject: Keeping Step With the Brownout - Information from home electrification specialists, of the U. S. Department of Agriculture

Today I want to talk about the "brownout"....especially about how we homemakers can help make it most effective.

Of course, you know we're asked to do without non-essential light in order to save coal. The less electricity we use, the less coal we need to make electric power. In fact, the War Production Board says "browning out" lights along the streets may save as much as two million tons of coal a year.

Well, homemakers can conserve electricity, too -- not by doing without any of the help electricity can give, but by making every kilowatt hour count....in the home as well as on the farm and in the factory.....Simply by guarding against waste and using electricity efficiently.

Take light, for instance. It's poor economy to try to get along with less light than you need. But home electrification specialists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture say the whole family can join in seeing that lights aren't left burning in an empty room. Dusty bulbs and shades can cut down lights as much as fifteen or twenty per cent, so keep them clean. Keep your windows clean, too, so you'll get as much light as possible during the day.

If you cook with electricity, plan your meals so food can be served as soon as it is ready...without warming or re-heating. One-dish meals will conserve electricity, too, as well as save time and dishwashing. And be sure to make good use of your oven. When it's heated up for baking, slip in an oven meal so it will "hitchhike" on the same electric heat.

To do the most surface cooking with the least electricity, use a pan with a tight-fitting lid...one that fits the unit so none of the heat will be wasted. Then go easy on the water. The less you use, the faster your food will cook and the

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more vitamins and minerals you'll save. Start whatever you're cooking on high heat ..then after it begins to boil, turn the heat down to low. With some foods like meat which require long, slow cooking, you can turn the heat off entirely five to ten minutes before it is done, and it will finish on "free" heat.

If you're all-out to conserve electricity, be careful how you use your electric iron. Don't heat it up for just a little dab of pressing or ironing. With a little planning, you'll find you can get considerably more ironing "mileage" from the same electricity. For instance, get together all the things you need before you start -- the basket of clothes, the clothes rack, hangers and so on. Then sort out your clothes so you can iron the rayons and other fabrics requiring low temperatures first -- then, later on as the iron gets hotter the things requiring higher temperatures. Be sure the iron doesn't get too hot...so you have to stop and let it cool off. Work as steadily as you can and avoid interruptions.

In general, you'll save electricity if you keep your electric appliances and equipment clean and in A-1 condition...so they won't have to work so hard or so long. Your vacuum cleaner, for instance, will clean a rug several minutes faster if the dust bag is not all choked up with dirt. Or your refrigerator motor will run less if the ice around the cooling unit is defrosted before it gets more than a quarter of an inch thick.

Of course these are only a few ways of conserving electricity in your home, but you get the idea. The rules are simple. Don't use electricity needlessly.... Keep electric lights and equipment clean and in good condition....use appliances carefully, and finally, plan your work ahead. By following these principles, you'll not only save electricity, but you'll also prolong the life of your equipment...and what's just as important....add to the ease and efficiency with which you do your everyday work.

